

Message Text

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42

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 RSR-01 RSC-01 SS-15 NSC-10 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-15 PRS-01 OMB-01

EUR-25 NIC-01 /096 W

----- 062825

R 271131Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9570

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6732

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAELI ELECTION CAMPAIGN

REF: STATE 168670 NOTAL

SUMMARY. PARTY LISTS OF KNESSET CANDIDATES MUST BE SUBMITTED BY SEPTEMBER 25, WHICH PARTIES OFFICIALLY REGARD AS THEIR DEADLINE FOR PREPARATION OF PLATFORMS. SERIOUS ELECTIONEERING WILL PROBABLY NOT BEGIN UNTIL AFTER HISTADRUT ELECTION SEPTEMBER 11. PROCESS OF LABOR PARTY'S READYING FOR ELECTION HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY DELAYED BY DEBATE OVER POLICY TOWARD OCCUPIED TERRITORIES WHICH ENDED AUGUST 15 AND WHICH STILL MUST BE IRONED OUT WITH PARTY'S ALIGNMENT PARTNER, MAPAM. PLANS TO FORM RIGHTWING ALIGNMENT AFTER INITIAL SUCCESSES HAVE BEEN JEOPARDIZED BY SERIOUS SQUABBLING. TWO TINY LEFTWING ALIGNMENTS HAVE BEEN FORMED, BUT EFFORT TO MERGE THEM COLLAPSED. END SUMMARY.

1. HISTADRUT ELECTION STILL SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 11. THIRTEEN PARTY LISTS WERE SUBMITTED AUGUST 22. URI AVNERI'S MERI (ISRAEL RADICAL PARTY) HAS PETITIONED FOR DELAY OF HISTADRUT ELECTION ON BASIS INEQUITY IN SINGLE BALLOT SYSTEM FOR NATIONAL
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AND LOCAL OFFICES. BUT TEL AVIV DISTRIC JUDGE HAS REJECTED MERI'S

REQUEST. EMBASSY ESTIMATES CHANCES VERY GOOD THAT ELECTION WILL TAKE PLACE AS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED. MOST HISTADRUT PLATFORMS COMPLETED.

2. KNESSET ELECTION SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 30. PARTY LISTS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY SEPTEMBER 25. WHILE THERE IS NO FORMAL DATE FOR COMPLETION OF PLATFORMS, ALL PARTIES WILL BE INTERESTED IN DOING SO EITHER BEFORE OR (AT LATEST) AT SAME TIME AS SUBMISSION OF PARTY LISTS.

3. THERE IS NO FORMAL DATE FOR OPENING OF CAMPAIGN. HISTADRUT CAMPAIGN ALREADY IN SWING, BUT THERE HAVE BEEN FEW APPEARANCES AND SPEECHES BY KEY LABOR LEADERSHIP. MOST KNESSET ELECTIONEERING TO DATE HAS TAKEN FORM OF INFORMAL MEETINGS IN PRIVATE HOMES AND OF NEWSPAPER AND TELEVISION ADVERTISING. IT LIKELY THAT MAJOR RALLIES AND SPEECHES BY KEY FIGURES WILL TAKE PLACE IN FINAL STAGE OF CAMPAIGN, AS KNESSET ELECTION CAMPAIGN FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES WILL ONLY BEGIN IN EARNEST WHEN HISTADRUT ELECTION COMPLETED.

4. LABOR PARTY HAS YET TO COMPLETE PLATFORM FOR KNESSET ELECTION. PREPARATION OF PLATFORM ORIGINALLY HAD BEEN DELAYED WHILE PARTY AWAITED MRS MEIR'S DECISION TO RUN AGAIN AT HEAD OF LABOR LIST. SUMMER MONTHS HAVE BEEN OCCUPIED WITH DEBATE ON POLICY TOWARD OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, ON WHICH LABOR PARTY LEADERSHIP FINALLY REACHED AGREEMENT AUGUST 15. PLATFORM COMMITTEE MUST NOW DISCUSS LEADERSHIP'S RECOMMENDATIONS AS WELL AS OTHER FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY ISSUES. KNESSET CAMPAIGN CAN BE EXPECTED TO GO INTO HIGH GEAR ONLY AFTER SUBMISSION PARTY LIST SEPTEMBER 25. UNTIL THEN MOST ACTIVITY WILL FOCUS ON INTENSIVE INFIGHTING FOR POSITIONS ON LIST.

5. ALSO, LABOR PARTY-MAPAM ALIGNMENT MUST STILL WORK OUT A COMMON CAMPAIGN PLATFORM. THIS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED ONLY AFTER THE LABOR PARTY COMPLETES ITS PLATFORM DELIBERATIONS. AS REPORTED TEL AVIV 6696, MAPAM OBJECTS TO THE LABOR PARTY'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY TOWARD OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND HAS INDICATED THAT IT WILL DISSOCIATE ITSELF FROM THOSE CLAUSES WHICH CONTRADICT ITS OWN PEACE PROGRAM.

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6. NEGOTIATIONS FOR FORMATION NEW RIGHTWING ALIGNMENT -- GAHAL, STATE LIST AND FREE CENTER -- HAVE TEMPORARILY FLOUNDERED. AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED ONLY ON NEW NAME (UNITY) AND ON JOINT LIST FOR HISTADRUT ELECTION. BUT VITAL ISSUE APPORTIONMENT OF SECURE PLACES ON KNESSET LIST HAS CREATED CRISIS ATMOSPHERE IN TRIPARTITE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE. GAHAL HAS MADE APPORTIONMENT OFFER BASED ON SEAT DISTRIBUTION IN PRESENT KNESSET. IN EFFECT, STATE LIST HAS BEEN OFFERED THREE SECURE

PLACES AND FREE CENTER TWO. SHMUEL TAMIR INSISTS THAT FREE CENTER SHOULD GET AT LEAST FOUR SECURED PLACES, ON BASIS RECENT POLLS. TAMIR ALSO IS INSULTED THAT HE HAS NOT BEEN OFFERED ONE OF FIRST FOUR PLACES ON JOINT LIST. THERE ARE ALSO NUMEROUS DISAGREEMENTS ON POLICY ISSUES BUT, IN EMBASSY VIEW, THESE ARE LESS CRITICAL AT PRESZNT THAN SEAT DISTRIBUTION ISSUE. ONE POLITICAL COMMENTATOR HAS STATED CAUSTICALLY, "THERE CAN NEVER HAVE BEEN SO SMALL AN ORCHESTRA WITH SO MANY PEOPLE BENT ON PLAYING FIRST FIDDLE."

7. FAR LEFT ALSO IN FERMENT, RESULT BEING TWO MERGERS BUT NO UNITED FRONT. URI AVNERI'S HAOLAM HAZEH HAS MERGED WITH MAJORITY OF NEW LEFT UNIVERSITY GROUP SIAH TO FORM ISRAEL RADICAL PARTY--MERI. AT SAME TIME, ISRAEL COMMUNIST PARTY--MAKI HAS MERGED WITH NEW UNIVERSITY-KIBBUTZ BASED RED BLUE MOVEMENT TO FORM MODED (FOCUS). BUT EFFORT TO BRING ALL THESE GROUPS TOGETHER UNDER ONE BANNER COLLAPSED DUE TO AVNERI'S DEMAND TO BE GIVEN FIRST PLACE ON JOINT KNESSET LIST.

8. COMMENT: ELECTION CAMPAIGN PROCESS SO FAR HAS SEEN VERY SLOW START. MAIN SINGLE REASON IS FACT THAT LABOR PARTY HAS MOVED SLOWLY IN IRONING OUT DIFFERENCES ON POLICY TOWARD OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. ALSO, MRS MEIR CLEARLY NOT EAGER TO HELP BEN-AHARON IN HISTADRUT ELECTION CAMPAIGN. AS FOR NEW RIGHTWING ALIGNMENT'S DIFFICULTIES, ARIK SHARON, WHO INITIATED ALIGNMENT IDEA, HAS TRIED TO ACCOMMODATE CONFLICTING DEMANDS, BUT CHARGED ATMOSPHERE OF NEGOTIATIONS HAS UNDERSCORED DIFFICULTY OF BRINGING PRIMA DONNAS SUCH AS BEGIN, TAMIR, WEIZMANN, HOROWITZ AND EHRLICH AROUND ONE TABLE. THERE IS POSSIBILITY THAT DEADLOCK WILL NOT BE RESOLVED. (BEN ELEZAR, HEAD OF HERUT INFORMATION DEPT, TOLD EMBASSY AUGUST 27 CHANCES ARE NOW GOOD FOR GAHAL-CONFIDENTIAL

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STATE LIST AGREEMENT, WHICH MIGHT IN TURN FORCE FREE CENTER TO FALL INTO LINE.)
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